



# Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission

650 W. State St., Room 145 • Boise Idaho 83720

Telephone: 208-332-1790 • Fax: 208-332-1799

[www.swc.idaho.gov](http://www.swc.idaho.gov)

## IDAHO SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### Public Teleconference Meeting

**January 19, 2011**

650 W. State St., Room 145, Boise Idaho

8:15 a.m. MDT

### APPROVED MINUTES

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#### COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bill Flory

Dwight Horsch

Dick Bronson

Roger Stutzman

Dave Radford

#### ADVISORS PRESENT:

Jeff Burwell, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Randy Purser, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

Karma Bragg, Idaho District Employees Association

#### COMMISSION STAFF PRESENT:

Sara Schmidt

Kristin Magruder

Chuck Pentzer

Carolyn Firth

#### PARTNERS AND GUESTS PRESENT:

Harriet Hensley, Deputy Attorney General

Steve Becker, Idaho Association of Soil

Conservation Districts & Nez Perce SWCD

Terry Halbert, North Side SWCD

Kari Schwendiman, Latah SWCD

Lori Ringel, Teton SWCD

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1 The meeting was called to order by Chairman Bill Flory, Idaho Soil & Water Conservation  
2 Commission (SWC) member, at 8:18 a.m.

3  
4 Welcome and self-introductions followed.

#### 5 6 REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES

7  
8 The Commissioners reviewed the draft minutes from the November 17, 2010 public meeting,  
9 the December 8, 2010 teleconference meeting, and the December 21, 2010 special  
10 teleconference meeting.

11  
12 Dick Bronson, SWC Secretary, requested a correction to the December 8, 2010 minutes. On  
13 page 3, line 59, change '2010' to '2011' and on lines 59 and 60, strike 'to review RCRDP loan  
14 business'.

15  
16 **Mr. Bronson moved to approve the draft minutes as corrected from November 17, 2010,**  
17 **December 8, 2010, and December 21, 2010.** Dave Radford, SWC Member, requested a  
18 correction to the November 17, 2010 minutes, page 5, line 138, change 'by' to 'but'. **Mr.**  
19 **Radford seconded the motion to approve the minutes as corrected. No further discussion.**  
20 **Motion passed unanimously.**

#### 21 22 FY 2011 FINANCIALS

23  
24 Sara Schmidt, SWC Administrator, presented the FY 2011 SWC financials ending December 31,  
25 2010. The Commission is 50% through the fiscal year with current expenditures of \$1,265,957  
26 which is 54% of budget.

27  
28 Trend is higher due to the amount of Trustee & Benefits (T&B) that has expended to date. With  
29 the total budgeted amount of district allocations being expended in December, T&B is at 75% of  
30 budget. Ms. Schmidt advised that the Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) may have  
31 some funds left at the end of the fiscal year due to contracts ending. The current WQPA  
32 balance is \$239,456 but per policy, the Commission has pre-approved approximately \$110,000  
33 worth of project work to occur this spring.

34  
35 In operating expenses, Ms. Schmidt advised the group that expenses appear to be trending low  
36 at 14.5% for the year and have a current balance remaining of \$163,412. However, after the  
37 payment to Idaho Counties Risk Management Program (ICRMP) posts in January and mandatory  
38 fees from other state agencies (controller's office, treasurer's office and other general state  
39 services) are paid, the actual to budget figures will be much closer.

40  
41 Personnel costs (PC) are trending low at approximately 42% primarily due to the two unfilled  
42 vacancies. The Eastern Idaho WQRC is being filled at the end of January and the other staff  
43 vacancy is scheduled to have a decision finalized and projected for budgeting purposes to be  
44 filled by April 18, 2011.

45  
46 The Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) had an unusual  
47 amount of activity during December due to high number of loan payoffs and high volume of  
48 annual payments. As of December 31<sup>st</sup>, outstanding principal balance is \$7,423,045 and the  
49 cash balance of the loan program is \$2,409,689.

50  
51 The Department of Administration fiscal personnel will be at the February 2011 meeting to  
52 meet the Commissioners and answer any questions.

53  
54 **Mr. Radford moved to accept the SWC Financial Report ending December 2010. Dwight**  
55 **Horsch, SWC Vice Chair, seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.**

56  
57 Ms. Schmidt discussed a potential \$120,368 roll down to T&B for district allocations. The  
58 money has come from a variety of sources including the sale of office furniture from last year's  
59 move, operating expenses set aside for the potential holdback as requested earlier in the fiscal  
60 year, and personnel cost savings from unfilled vacancies. Ms. Schmidt appreciates the valuable  
61 input from individual districts and the board members of the Idaho Association of Soil  
62 Conservation Districts (IASCD).

63  
64 Ms. Schmidt advised the Commissioners of the state procedure for rolling down the funds to  
65 T&B. Discussion followed about the district expectations of whether or not this would be  
66 understood as one time funding compared to an expectation of receiving extra money in future  
67 years. Feedback was given by district representatives and there was support for the additional  
68 dollars this year and support for the IASCD resolution at conference that supported level  
69 funding of at least \$800,000 per year.

70  
71 There was additional discussion about unfilled commission vacancies, the possibility of losing  
72 the remaining staff vacancy and/or the funding for the position if it is not filled. Not only is  
73 there a concern for that, but also the Commission workload and the priorities that are being  
74 deferred and what the long-term effects to the partnership, the Commission and state  
75 mandates could be.

76  
77 The Governor has announced that there will not be a holdback requested by the executive  
78 branch, but the Legislature does have the option of a current year rescission although that is  
79 considered unlikely. Ms. Schmidt discussed various options for meeting any holdbacks or  
80 rescissions and is comfortable recommending the \$120,368 roll down to district allocations at  
81 this point in the fiscal year.

82  
83 There was a question about what the district allocation budget will look like for FY 2012. Ms.  
84 Schmidt discussed that the SWC budget has not been set by the Legislature yet and she is  
85 cautious about speculating until it is. Following approval of the FY 2012 budget by the  
86 legislature, the Commission will move as quickly as possible to approve a blueprint for next year  
87 so that districts have as much notice as possible.

## FY 2012 GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms. Schmidt advised the Commission and partners of the FY 2012 Governor's Budget Recommendation. She focused on the general funds appropriation, which is the bulk of the Commission funding. The Commission will experience an overall 3.45% decrease in appropriations, which will come mostly from the Operating budget, but small decreases will also come from Personnel and T&B. Given that WQPA projects are closing out according to schedule, there should be more flexibility next year in the T&B budget for district allocations.

**Mr. Radford moved to modify the previously approved FY 2011 budget for a one-time roll down of \$120,368 to Trustee & Benefit to be expended for a one-time district allocation. Mr. Horsch seconded.** Further discussion followed. A clarification was made that the allocation would be sent out via match funding formula. Additionally, there is one district that has until January 31, 2011 to submit a final report, and if that does not happen, there will be approximately \$13,657 to send out to the other districts. **Roll call vote was taken with all voting in the affirmative. Motion passed.**

## REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ms. Schmidt advised the Commission that both the Senate and House Agricultural Affairs Committees reviewed the temporary rule and passed a motion to approve the rule with an extension until June 30, 2011. The Commission as a whole was praised by Representative Judy Boyle on the excellent communications with the districts, the inclusion of the districts in the Commission business, and the way that the conservation partnership has pulled together and is now working collaboratively.

The Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC) Budget hearing is scheduled for February 8, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. The Senate Ag Confirmation hearing for the Commissioners is scheduled for February 15, 2011 at 8:00 a.m. Verbal comments are limited to five minutes each. Commission meeting will follow immediately thereafter in the East Conference Room of the Joe R. Williams building on State Street, directly behind the Capitol.

Randy Purser, IASCD President, advised that February 10<sup>th</sup> is a tentative date for the Legislative Displays. Once this date is confirmed, Ms. Schmidt will request time on the Senate and House Ag Committee agendas for the Commission's Annual Report to minimize travel for staff and partners.

There was discussion about the budget hearing and what the Commission is required to present to JFAC. All state agencies are required to support and present the Governor's recommended budget and may not present any additional information unless specifically asked by a member of JFAC. Further discussion followed and clarification was made about why the Commission had not specifically presented on the matter of additional district funding in the past. It was reiterated that agencies may not present any additional funding requests during their budget hearing.

133  
134 Mr. Radford inquired about the status of the Working Group for the Strategic Plan update and  
135 is concerned about meeting the upcoming July 1, 2011 deadline. Mr. Horsch responded. Ms.  
136 Schmidt advised that the deadline for volunteers is January 20, 2011 and the Commission has  
137 received an overwhelming response of people willing to serve on the Working Group. Staff will  
138 send a list of the volunteers to the co-chairs after the deadline has passed.

139  
140 Mr. Flory advised all participants that the Commission is actively seeking loan applications for  
141 the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP) loan program which  
142 has recently lowered interest rates. He encouraged districts and partners to promote the  
143 program to assist with matching funds from Farm Bill programs and other projects. He also  
144 thanked all partners for their active participation in the meetings and teleconferences.

145  
146 **Mr. Stutzman moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 a.m. Mr. Horsch seconded. Motion**  
147 **passed.**

148  
149 Respectfully submitted,

150  
151 Dick Bronson  
152 Commissioner and Secretary,  
153 Idaho Soil & Water Conservation Commission